

The Glory of Carmel

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"And when Jesus was in Bethania in the house of Simon the leper there came a woman having an alabaster box of precious ointment and poured it on His head as He was at table. And the disciples seeing it had indignation saying: To what purpose is this waste?—Jesus knowing it said to them: Why do you trouble this woman for she hath wrought a good work upon me.—For she in pouring this ointment upon My burial."—Matt. xxvi:6-12.

I AM sure that many have read in the daily papers the account of the incident that has brought us together and have sneeringly asked "why this waste?" I am sure that in the past few months many have passed by this building that loving sacrifice has raised to the honor of God and the glory of His Church and have curiously inspected its sacred precincts and have mockingly smiled "why this waste? This building could be used to house God's orphans and God's poor. These women in all their charm of youth and of beauty, in all their gifts of mind and of heart could use their lives in doing something useful;—in teaching our children, in caring for our widows and our orphans, our sick and our poor. Why this waste of talents and of power?" Thus the ignorant cry who know not the ways of God and the sublime purposes of God's Church. Thus the malicious cry whose hearts are hardened by lust for gold and whose judgment of what is good is gauged only by what they can see and weigh and buy. Thus the selfishly sensual cry, who, cowards as they are, cannot bear even the thought of sacrifice and will not try to understand. Thus even in the very heart of the great Church of God the cry is sometimes raised by those who want to reduce the whole power of God and of grace to a material economic standard where they can show by statistics and by balance sheets just what the Church is

doing for humanity. There was one Judas among the twelve to complain of the waste of the ointment. We should not be surprised if there are hundreds of Judases among the millions in God's Church.

"Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." This is the standard Christ our Lord has set for His followers; and as the perfections of God are manifested to us in the myriad varieties of nature, and as everything we hear or see or feel is but the reflection of the infinite goodness of God, and as He the Son of God gave us in human form the ideal way of serving the Father and of making ourselves perfect as He is perfect and has left in His church the divine sources of grace that will help us to reach this ideal, He expects to find in His church the perfection of every detail that He left for our imitation. All cannot imitate Christ in the same way. Most, in fact practically all, are called to imitate Him and to work out their perfection in the helplessness of Bethlehem and the home-life of Nazareth where Christ through His Blessed Mother set the ideal of self-sacrificing parenthood and through the labors of St. Joseph blessed honest toil and set the example of a truly Christian home. The first act of His public life was to bless the union of man and of woman and make it one of His great sacraments, an infallible channel of grace, a sure means of holiness and of personal sanctification. And thank God in the Catholic Church with her dauntless protection of Christian marriage and with this high ideal of self-sacrifice and of the sacredness of human love, we have our Bethlehems and our Nazareths scattered over the world and offering to God the Father the homage of the loving service of Jesus and of Mary and of Joseph.

"Jesus went about doing good." He was a light to the blind, sweet music to ears of the deaf, new life to the leper, strength and support to the lame and the cripple, the healer of hearts that were broken, the Father of the orphan and the poor. And so in the great Church of God is this part of the perfection of Christ imitated by our great charitable institutions and organizations. And only recently under

the leadership and inspiration of our devoted Bishop, the Shepherd of the flock of Christ, you have given proof to our city and to our country that the ideal of Christian Charity still holds its high place of honor in the Church of Jesus Christ. And to-day in this new Carmel which he has just dedicated and blessed, your devoted Bishop wishes to express to you his deepest gratitude for your generous, self-sacrificing cooperation and promises to have you all close to his heart in loving benediction when, on May 17th, he will have the privilege of assisting in Rome at the canonization of Carmel's most recent glory, the Little Flower of Jesus. But far more than money and alms is the gift that thousands of our young men and our young women have made who, hearing the pleading cry of Christ for His poor and suffering and needy ones, have sacrificed all that the human heart holds dearest to go and to follow Him. His Priests, too, stand like other Christs going about doing good and proclaim to the world that Christ still lives in His Church; Ministers of Him Whom they bear with them in the little golden pyx, their hearts beat true to the Master's in their human sympathy for human sorrow and in the divine solace they bring to human ills. And as by the cross of Jesus there stood Mary His mother so by the Priest in his labors and his toil there stands the noble band of Christian men and women, our teaching brotherhoods and sisterhoods, consecrating their lives to God to help the Priests to fulfill perfectly the command of the Master "to go forth and teach all nations."

But the ideal that Christ set us found its perfection on Calvary and there must be in the Church of God some who with St. Paul can say "with Christ I am crucified to the world." And as the worst insults and mockeries were hurled at Christ as He hung on His cross so we should not be surprised that of all those in the Church of Christ who imitate the ideal that He set for us, those should receive the greatest share of His ignominy who are closest to His cross and are being crucified for love of Him. The very cry raised against the Carmelites and all

other orders of contemplation and of silence and of prayer is their greatest glory for it lets them share in the ignominy of Calvary and lets them feel the anguish of the broken Heart of the Master and adds the bitterness of the gall and vinegar to their own voluntary crucifixion. "Why this waste?" cries a world of Judases and of mocking blasphemers. And the spouse of Jesus Christ lovingly looks up into the agonized Face of her Crucified Master and hears His answer "She has prepared My Body for burial,"—"She is sharing in My suffering and in My agony and My crucifixion." If Christ understands, what cares the Spouse of Christ if the whole world carps and mocks?

To those to whom this monastery seems a waste and to whom the sacrifice these girls are making seems useless, our only answer is, then the thirty years of prayer and of silent hidden sacrifice at Nazareth were a waste, then the Blood shed by the Lamb of God on Calvary was useless; for here in the silence and the unknown prayerful life of this new home these consecrated Virgins of Jesus Christ will reproduce the hidden silent, prayerful life of Nazareth and the immolation of Calvary's cross. If the Church of God is to be in very truth the spouse of Jesus Christ she must reproduce in the life of her members the life of Christ in every detail and we cannot but say in the words of Christ Himself that of all those who imitate the life of the Master, "these have chosen the better part."

We can turn to God's design in the life of St. Teresa, the founder of the Carmelite Sisters, to learn His special purpose in calling a young girl to this severe life of penance and of sacrifice and of complete self-immolation. A false Priest of God in the very heart of the Church raised the cry of rebellion. He taught that man was absolutely self-sufficient in working out his salvation, that he had no need of a Church to come between him and His God; by faith alone would he live out his spiritual life without the necessity of sacraments and of prayer. It was the rebellion—selfish, personal self-sufficiency and absolute

spiritual independence; the proud, arrogant exaltation of self. What was one way in which God answered the cry of His rebel Priest? There came the whisper of His grace to the heart of a young woman who had been prepared by years of sickness and of suffering to be one of the instruments of God against the Lutheran rebellion. She harkened to the whisper and the call of the Master, and taking the choicest of God's fair flowers of innocence whose love made them brave enough to be victims of sacrifice, she laid herself and them at the foot of the Cross of Christ to make reparation for the false treachery of His apostate sensual Priest, and answered Luther's proud boast of self-exaltation by obliterating their own name and identity and, as far as they could, even destroying their own personality until they became but a voice behind a curtained screen, their "lives hidden with Christ in God," and answered his rebel cry of absolute personal self-sufficiency and by making themselves absolutely dependent on the Church in obedience to their Bishop, reproducing the great sacrifice of the Master "who humbled Himself becoming obedient unto death even to the death of the cross."

And the purpose with which God inspired Teresa has been and is today the sublime purpose of every girl who consecrates herself to God according to the rule of Teresa at the altar of Carmel. She is to make reparation to God for the sins of the world, especially the sins of those in the very heart of the Church; she is to draw from the great Heart of the Master the strength and the support of His grace for those heroically fighting out in the great far-flung battle-line of the Church militant.

"It is fitting that one man should die for the people," thus without realizing it the High Priest of the Jews summed up the whole purpose of Christ's suffering and death. Heaven was closed. Man had lost the right to grace and to the Father's love. The sacrifice of the eternal Son of God, true God and true man, was to win them back again and make satisfaction to the Father for the sins of man. And looking out on a

world of sin and of lust and of selfishness the great Church of God says: "It is fitting that some should die for the people," and she calls for those who are willing to imitate Christ in the sacrifice of self for the sins of the world and in making reparation to the Father for the ingratitude of those who should love him; she is calling for those who are brave enough in their love for the Master and for souls red with His precious Blood to climb with Him the hill of Calvary and with this sacrifice of life to unite their sacrifice of all that life holds dearest. The call of the Church of God has not fallen on deaf ears. Here are some of those who have answered and they are about to enter the Calvary of their new Carmel to offer themselves as victims with their crucified Savior for the sins and the souls of men.

The curse of the world is selfishness; men and women and even little children seeking selfish desires to the neglect of most sacred duties are becoming cowards in the face of sacrifice. Here these women will unselfishly sacrifice all that the human heart holds most dear to make reparation for the selfishness of the world. On this their Calvary they are nailing themselves to the cross of Christ by the three nails of poverty and of chastity and of obedience, making the sacrifice of self complete, the sacrifice of their own bodies and the sacrifice of their own wills and desires. The world is and has ever been mad in its wild seeking for luxuries and for the good things of earth. These women have given up even the very necessities of life. They have nothing that they can call their own; in fasting and in poverty and in absolute dependence on the alms of others they offer up their lives to God. The world has ever degraded the noblest impulse that God has put into the heart of man and of woman, human love; and the stench of Sodom and Gomorrah is ever rising to the throne of an all pure God and calling for vengeance. And the vengeance of God would be rained down on a lustful world in brimstone and in fire, were it not that he saw the innocence of Nazareth's home reproduced by the fairest of His creatures, other

little flowers of Lisieux, who, in their innocence and in their love, in their youth and in their beauty, immolated to Him on their altar of sacrifice, send up from their virgin hearts a sweet-smelling holocaust that atones for the lusts of the world. The world is and has always been selfishly independent, pouting as a spoiled child under any restraint; and in its selfish independence it has broken down all respect for authority, human and divine; parents are now becoming the slaves of their children; the highest interests of the state are often selfishly sacrificed to the self-interest of a few; even in the Church of God the cry of rebellion is heard at times and the great omnipotent God looks down upon a world He has made to serve Him merely serving self and adoring the false God of personal independence. The sight would be more than even God could stand were it not that He saw His divine Son climbing the hill of Calvary "obedient unto death" and with Him this brave-hearted band of heroic women who on the altar of Carmel, in a world of cowards, are sacrificing all that they love and desire, their own wills and personal liberty in all things that they may perfectly fulfill His divine will in every detail of their life.

"It is fitting that one man should die for the people." Some must make reparation to the Father for the sins of the world and here they stand offering themselves as innocent victims. They will continue this afternoon in this their new home the life of unending sacrifice, their voluntary immolation for the sins and the souls of men. St. Teresa came back from her vision of hell and for the rest of her life stood in tears and in the marks of her own self-inflicted penance under the bloody cross of her Saviour with the outstretched arms of prayer trying to stop men and women from rushing headlong into hell. And so these her children will stand with her doing for others what they will not do for themselves. Tonight and every night just at the hours when the world is at the height of its pleasures they will kneel at the Calvary of their altar pleading with the Heart of the Master for the souls of men and making rep-

aration to the Father for the sins of the world. Tonight and every night they will be kneeling erect in the penance of watching and of prayer before their tabernacled Lord while our young men and women are going through their wild animal dances and degrading the noblest instincts that God has put in the human heart. Tonight and every night in hunger and in thirst, they will unite themselves with their crucified Saviour while our people all over this great country of ours will be indulging every whim and every desire and wildly revelling in their drinking parties that in their wild freedom rival the bacchanalian orgies of pagan Rome. Tonight and every night these sinless victims will kneel in the pains and the marks of their self-inflicted penances at the feet of their wounded, thorn-crowned Saviour while our growing boys and girls are like fickle little moths warming and scorching themselves at the flames of passion. To make up for the licentious freedom and the sensual liberties that our young people are allowing one another in their false perversion of sacred human love and affection, these virgin spouses of Jesus Christ are isolating themselves and cutting themselves off from all whom they fondly love and yearn for, making themselves as was Mary of Nazareth, in their lily-white purity, the "little slave-girls of God." To make up for all the sins of the tongue, for all the suggestive stories and the lies and the deceits and the swearing and the blasphemies that rise to the ears of an all holy God they are sealing their lips in the penance of silence and denying themselves the delights of taste. For all those who think not of their souls and neglect their most sacred duties to God for the sake of pleasure and through criminal laziness and neglect, they will consume themselves in a life of prayer where their bodies will be sacrificed for the sake of the souls of men, and where for all of us they will pay to the Creator the debt we owe of homage and of adoration and of love. Thus right from our very city two clouds will rise to God's heaven, one the smoke-cloud of selfish, cowardly self-indulgence; the other the sweet-smelling incense of

unselfish, heroic self-sacrifice. The second will make God overlook and forget the first. And who will stand over this altar of sacrifice and ask: "Why this waste?"

Sacrifice in a noble cause brings the deepest joy to the human heart. We have seen our strong manly boys weep as babes because they were not chosen to go to the bloodstained fields of France and die. And we have seen them with a smile on their lips and a thrill in their hearts wave a farewell to their loved ones and a greeting to death. If sacrifice for country brings such joy, what must be the joy of those who sacrifice themselves for God? These noble-hearted girls in all their innocence and youth have stood at the parting of the ways and with joy set before them they have chosen the pain, and with glory set before them have chosen the shame, just to be like Christ. Theirs is the thrill of those who go smiling into battle and fly into the very face of death under the inspiration of 'he greatest leader it has ever been the glory of man to follow, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of their hearts. There is no sorrow or sadness here in Carmel, but the joy of conquering heroines who glory in the trials and the hardships and in the scars and the wounds of battle borne for the One they love. In the poverty and the tears of their Bethlehem, in the loneliness and the toil and the obscurity of their Nazareth, in the agony of their Calvary, with Mary the Mother of Jesus, their hearts are ever singing their love song of triumph—"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth ever rejoice in God my Saviour: for He that is mighty hath done great things to me and blessed be His name." Let the world say and think what it will, they have the Master's blessing: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven; blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice for they shall have their fill; blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God." That is their joy and that their glory; they are doing it for Him and the more they suffer, the closer they are to Him; the more they share in His pain, the more they glory in the exaltation of His victory.

"Why this waste?"—and Christ's answer shows that the ointment was not wasted, but put to the very best possible use in preparing His body for burial. That is our answer also to those who raise the selfish cry against the sacrifice these women are making and against the purpose of this monastery. What would our answer be to the man who would look over the row after row of little white crosses that dot the Virginia hills at Arlington and ask: "Why this waste?"

Utter scorn would be our answer: for "greater love than this no man hath than that a man lay down his life for his friends." And no lad whose bones rest at Arlington or on the green fields of France ever gave America more heroic service or a greater proof of love than these American girls will give here on Carmel. No nation can endure against its God. And against the traitors in America who are striving to make this nation pagan and false to the high ideals for which our forefathers bled and died, these American girls are rising in protest and offering themselves as voluntary victims to show God that America is true and loyal and equal to the greatest sacrifice and the highest homage of adoration and of love. The crosses at Arlington and in France point to God's Heaven as an undying lesson of what our lads have done for us and for our liberty. The cross here on Carmel will ever point to the blue of God's heaven and silently proclaim to America what these American Maidens are doing to draw down God's blessing on this great nation of ours which boasts that "in God it trusts," for this cross will stretch out its arms in benediction over the councils of our statesmen and over the homes of America, as the self-immolation of these American heroines makes our people brave enough to sacrifice petty, personal gain for the higher good and the true American ideals.

Some trace the history of Carmel to the great Prophet Elias and his followers who on the ancient Carmel served God in penance and in prayer. Be that as it may, the modern Carmel is true to that other prophet of old, who in vision saw the wonderful

ladder stretching from earth to heaven and on which the Angels of God ascended and descended taking the prayers of the faithful to God and bringing back His Blessings in return. For Carmel is the ladder stretching from earth to Heaven on which these angels of sacrifice ascend with their prayers and bring back from the Church of God triumphant in Heaven the strength and the grace and the divine support for victory to the Church of God battling on earth. The armies of Israel conquered as long as the arms of Moses were outstretched in prayer, and so these arms outstretched on the Mount of Carmel will bring victory to the armies of Christ in the far-flung battle-line where God's church is combating the powers of darkness. The Church of God would be false to her trust and fall short of the ideal set by her Master, if some of her children did not rise to the height of heroic sanctity and self-sacrifice. Here on the Calvary of Carmel the Catholic Church can point out to the world one proof that she is divine and that she bears the mark of holiness set on her by her divine Founder. "By their fruits you shall know them," and the Church of God can point to the rich fruitage borne on the tree of Carmel to show that she is the Spouse of Jesus Christ. She calls to all the world to come and taste of the sweet fruit of sacrifice grown here. For the immolation of Carmel is not for self but for every soul that is red with the Blood of Jesus Christ. They are sacrificing self that others "May have life and have it more abundantly." They are smilingly going into the battle that "Christ's Kingdom may come" in the hearts of all men. They are giving up earthly life that all may have everlasting life and "this is everlasting life that they may know Thee the Only true God and Him whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ." And on the tree of Carmel there has grown the fairest flower that has smiled on God's earth these later years. She comes from the hill of sacrifice with her arms full of roses and the smile of God on her lips. In the light of her innocent eyes parents have grown strong in the heroic life of Christian parenthood and feel a confidence that their little

ones will be protected from harm in answer to the Little Flower's prayer and in imitation of her simple, saintly little ways; for little ones can look up to her and grow obedient and docile and true; our young men and women find in her an inspiration that makes them go through life's joy with the smile of God and scattering the flowers of maidenly modesty and manly self control. That is what Carmel is doing for all of us and for our homes. And who will dare ask: "Why this waste?"

The Church of God is a power on the earth shedding rays of light and of warmth and of joy. But as there can be no electric light and heat without the dynamo that silently through some unseen force generates the power, so next to the abiding Spirit of God in His Church here is the power that silently and unknown sends forth its light to those of God's consecrated ones who are actively carrying on the work of God in the class room, over the sick bed, and in the homes of the orphans and the poor. Our devoted sisters and brothers who in the stress of daily labors hardly find time for themselves and their own souls feel a silent source of strength coming from the dynamo of penance and of prayer here on the Mount of Carmel. And who will stand in the shadow of this house of spiritual dynamic power and ask: "Why this waste?"

Our Little Flower, the angel child of Lisieux, was one night making her way to the Chapel and through weakness could hardly walk. Her superior told her that she thought she was too weak to endure the night penance and prayer but the little heroine of God replied: "Mother, maybe some priest is struggling tonight for a soul, and if it costs me my life let me make this offering for him and for his work." And so we Priests of God as we go through the fields of God's Church reaping in the rich harvest of souls for the Master, are gathering the fruitage that has been watered by the tears and the blood of these heroines of God. We Priests of God, in the midst of the world's allurements and temptation, with all our human frailty feel a strength that comes from the

sacrifice of Carmel's hill, for one of the great objects of this life of sacrifice is to win God's blessing on the work of God's priests, to "keep these his holy ones in the Sanctuary of Christ's Sacred Heart where none may harm them, to keep unsullied the lips purpled by His precious Blood, to keep pure and un-earthly the hearts sealed by the sublime marks of His divine Priesthood, and to bless their labors with abundant fruit." Is there a vocation more sublime, is there a purpose more divine? And is there anyone in God's Church who dare ask "Why this waste?"

So farewell, Brides of Christ, as you go to bury yourselves for Christ. Mexico's loss was America's gain, and God bless the devoted Shepherd of our flock who, an exile himself, and who knows what it is to be far from home and native land for so paternally protecting your first exile community and so generously promoting this new home. You are the pride of our city, and this building, raised through the offerings of devoted friends, shows how Buffalo appreciates the treasure that it has in you. Turn your eyes for the last time to those who have made this sacrifice possible, those devoted parents who, like Abraham of old, have brought their best and their dearest to this hill to sacrifice her to God and their country's good. In the tears of to-day's sacrifice they can look in trustful joy to God. They know that you will be safe in the arms of the One you love and they thank God that He has deigned to bless their family by choosing one of their own for this noble and this heroic sacrifice for the souls of men. They have not given you up: they have but given you back to Him Who gave you to them, and when the battle of life is over they will meet you in the eternal Carmel and read your life story in the smile of God and the welcome of Christ: "Well done, good and faithful servants."

Brides of Christ, we will not keep you from the One you love and for Whom your pure hearts yearn. He will lead you into your home and from you He will never depart. You are taking into your arms not the cross but the crucifix and as you press it to

your hearts you will feel the throb of the Heart that broke on Calvary and from His great Heart there will go out into your own the divine inspiration of the joy of sacrifice for the One you love and for the souls that are red with His most precious Blood. He Whom you love will start each day with you on the altar of sacrifice as He offers His Body and His Blood to the Father for the sins and the souls of men. And as from the Calvary of your altar each day your Lord will say "This is My Body" your answer from the Calvary of Carmel will be an echo of His own oblation "This is my body," as you offer to Him in union with the great sacrifice of Calvary your innocent bodies as victims, just to be like Christ Whom you love, and to make up to His heavenly Father for the sins and the lusts of the world, to draw down the rich blessing of God upon Priests and upon people, upon our homes and our city and this great country of ours. This is the meaning of Carmel. This is God's answer to the cry "Why this waste?" This tells the secret of your sacrifice, of your penance and your silence and of your watchings and of your prayer. This tells the secret of your joy which is beyond all understanding, the joy that they alone know who have sacrificed life for an ideal and for the glory of one they love. "You have chosen the better part and it shall not be taken from you." And so with the Blessing of God bestowed by your devoted Bishop, take Him, Jesus of Nazareth, for the love of your hearts, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better and for worse, for poorer and for richer, in pain and not in health, until death do you unite.

Prayer

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EVERY sane man believes in a personal God, the Creator of heaven and earth. Between the Creator and every creature there is a permanent bond. The bond that unites man with God is religion. Religion, as we take it, is supernatural. Into the nature of man it conveys the real element of grace. It enables man to communicate in the very nature and life of God. Every life postulates, not merely a living source, but demonstration in some kind of action. The fundamental function of religion is recognition of God. This recognition must be mental and moral, interior and exterior. In a word, it must employ the whole nature of man and devote it to the service of God. We call this practical recognition of God worship. Now the worship of God involves two things, adoration and prayer. It is safe to say that prayer is often misunderstood. There is a general impression that it is always petition. Often it is, but not always. The theologians call it the elevation and application of the mind and heart to God. It is the highest form of communication conceivable between a child and the best of fathers. It involves thought and desire, attitude and language.

To write the history of prayer would be telling the history of humanity. To describe its nature would be fathoming the heart of God and the soul of man. There can be no doubt that God loves us. His delight is the happiness of His creatures. In fact, he has bound up his life with ours. Our every thought concerns Him. Our every sorrow appeals to Him. He has made us. He has prepared for us an eternal home. To deserve it there must be human effort and divine assistance. The two elements are absolutely essential. One will not do. The two must combine. But we are not to work out our life alone. The promise of Christ, "I will not leave you orphans," reveals the attitude of God. We must believe our Heavenly Father is at least as much concerned in our welfare as an earthly father is ordinarily concerned

in the life and work of his children. We believe He works in us and with us. Without Him we can do nothing. We must go to Him by prayer, that our life may be sustained, that our strength may be maintained, that our effort may be inspired and enabled. He tells us, do what you can; look to Me for the rest. Or, as it has been said, act as if all depended upon you; know that all depends upon God. There is no guarantee so broad as, "ask and ye shall receive." Lest there should be some doubt, Christ made a solemn promise, "Amen, amen, I say unto you, *whatsoever* ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He will give it to you" (John xvi. 23). This promise assures us that for every need of ours God has made provision. All we have to do is realize that need and draw on our Father in Heaven, Who will honor every draft of ours with a full supply of all the light we need to see our way, and all the strength we need to do our whole duty.

The Catholic prays not merely to God. He holds spiritual communion with the saints. But there is the widest conceivable difference between the prayers he addresses to God and those he offers to the saints. He prays to God to honor God for his own sake. He prays to the saint to honor the saint for God's sake. He asks favors of God, Who alone can grant life and grace and mercy. He asks the saints to pray to God for him, as we ask our friends to plead for us.

Brownson tells us,

Many years ago, long before I had the happiness of being received into the communion of the Catholic Church, I was in the habit of frequently closing my letters to my friends with the words, pray for me. One day, writing to a very dear friend, who was not precisely a saint, I concluded unthinkingly with the words, pray for me. I did so from the force of habit, but I had no sooner written the words than a sudden thought struck me, and I exclaimed to myself: "There is the justification of the Catholic practice of invocation of saints. Here am I asking a sinful mortal to pray for me. How much rather should I ask the prayers of a beatified saint in heaven." ("Works," Vol. VIII., pp. 149, 150.)

The doctrine of the invocation of saints rests on the

principle that God, in developing his eternal plan, avails himself of creatures. In the physical world, God uses natural laws to bring about natural results. Thus, there can be no doubt that God wills the harvest, but there will be no harvest if the farmer does not plough the field and sow the seed. So is it in the moral order. God employs men on earth to teach His truth and to convey His grace. The saints die, but they do not cease to exist. Death is merely a transition. They are active in their sphere. We may call that sphere the will-world. There the will of the saints is in eternal and irrevocable harmony with the will of God. The will of God is our sanctification. This, then, is the will of every saint in Heaven. Even though we never ask, they constantly seek virtue and happiness for us, and we believe there is some way in which they can and do manifest their will to God, and there can and must be some way by which they can emphasize and particularize their and our desires.

The things we may pray for have been summed up for us in the Lord's Prayer. It embraces all the things we need for temporal and eternal happiness. Of course, the supreme object of prayer should be salvation and all the things we need to make salvation certain. But we may and should pray for things temporal in so far as they may be necessary for our success and happiness without conflicting with our final attainment of Heaven. The Catholic believes in the infallibility of prayer when it is addressed to God for the things we need to save our soul. Of course, even this prayer must have certain qualities. It must be said, *believing*, that is with confidence. "And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 22). It must be offered with due appreciation of our own weakness and unworthiness and accompanied by a consistent effort to do what in us lies, and it must be said with perseverance.

We pray not merely for ourselves. We believe in the solidarity of the universe. We believe that every atom affects in some way every other atom, no matter how remote. So, too, in the moral order we believe that every human heart was meant to throb not merely with love for God, but with love for every man. Therefore, we pray for others. We pray for the living and we pray for

the dead. We know full well that the lost soul is beyond the reach of prayer, but we do not know when a soul is lost. It is not for man to judge. There are depths in the divine mercy which human ken can never fathom. Things may seem, but eternity will reveal what is. Beyond the grave is the great clearing-house in which all values shall be finally and certainly adjusted.

One of the great difficulties about the efficacy of prayer comes from our failure to appreciate the wisdom of God. This appears particularly when we ask for temporal favors. Inexperience makes a child feel that he needs a knife or a pistol. The possession of it would mean danger if not destruction to himself and to others. No one can accuse a father of indifference because he refuses such a prayer. The failure of God to grant the favors we often request can be explained in the same way. He knows what is good for us and often His refusal to grant what we ask is a kindness. Then, too, in the case of friends for whom we pray, we must consider the obstacles they place in the way of God's grace. Man has liberty, and so long as he lives even God cannot compel him to choose virtue or accept light. There can be no doubt that in answer to our prayer God will offer grace and mercy to the sinner, light to him who walks in darkness, but if the offer is rejected the fault is not God's, but man's. When our Blessed Saviour preached to the world He offered salvation to all. Many were called; few were chosen, not because He called only the few, but because the many refused the grace which the few accepted. The battle of life is not merely between temptation and virtue. It is between the will of God and the will of man, between grace and inclination.

The old prejudice against prayer based on the immutability of the laws of nature is fast disappearing. There is no law that cannot be suspended or repealed by the authority that made it. If there is a law, there must be a lawgiver. Grant the lawgiver the infinite knowledge and power our concept postulates for God, and you must concede the prevision of every possible contingency, the adjustment of law, and of the things the law controls. Conditions depend, not on the law, but on the supreme will that makes all law and adjusts all things. The Catholic,

therefore, believes in the miracle and considers it no crime to seek a divine interposition in behalf of the humblest child of God. That our belief has foundation is proved by a record as long as history. The age of miracles is not passed. There are facts today in the moral and physical order that clearly show divine interposition. Even in our day, men whom the world calls wise have been known to lay aside their so-called wisdom and, kneeling beside the unlettered and the lowly, have cried out with St. Paul, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable are His ways!"

The foundation of our hope in prayer is not merely the goodness and love of our Heavenly Father. It is the merits of His Eternal Son, Who, by the Incarnation became our Brother, and in the nature and form of man, made full and complete atonement for our guilt and gave us a right to say, "Our Father Who art in Heaven." In the Incarnation and Atonement, the human nature of Christ was personal and individual. It is the function of the Church and of every religious act, like prayer and sacrifice, to apply to each man the merits of Christ and the fruits of His life and death. Now that He is seated at the right hand of the Father to make intercession for us, the work of sanctification here and of salvation hereafter becomes His work and ours. His merits are infinite. Prayer enables us to participate in those merits and human words and wishes find value and acceptance because they are united with Him, Who is not merely the Son of God, but the Son of Man.

It is superfluous to tell anyone that prayer is necessary. Nature dictates it. The soul craves it. The lips speak it. The normal man turns to his Heavenly Father as naturally and as freely as a child turns to the mother that bore him.

There is a religious sense in man. It may become inactive through neglect or inoperative through vice, but in grave crises it will revive and act in some appeal to the only One Who can hear him and help him.

The cry of the dying Christ was the cry of a man. It came from a human heart. It expresses what every man must feel whose nature has not been perverted by sen-

suality or whose mind has not been debauched by a cultivated atheism.

From time to time, every man who has given even a little thought to the great problems of his origin, his duty, and his destiny, will feel the need of a light, which only God can give and of a help no creature can impart. It is only in prayer that man learns what he is and what God is. There he comes face to face with his Creator and realizes what may be called the majesty and perfection of God. By contrast, communion with God reveals to man his own weakness and insignificance. He must marvel that God should think of him at all, much more that God should love him with that eternal love of which the Psalmist speaks. It is safe to say that the habit of prayer inevitably results in the practical adjustment of human life to divine design. When a man prays, he looks into the very heart of God. There he beholds perfections he must admire and love. There he sees the eternal plan in which his life must forever play a part. Between the heart of God and the heart of man prayer maintains a communion or association that perfects human love and compels its expression in aim and in action. Thus we endeavor to develop the Christian character and become conformable to the image of God's most dear Son. This, in a word, is the vocation of every child of the Heavenly Father.